

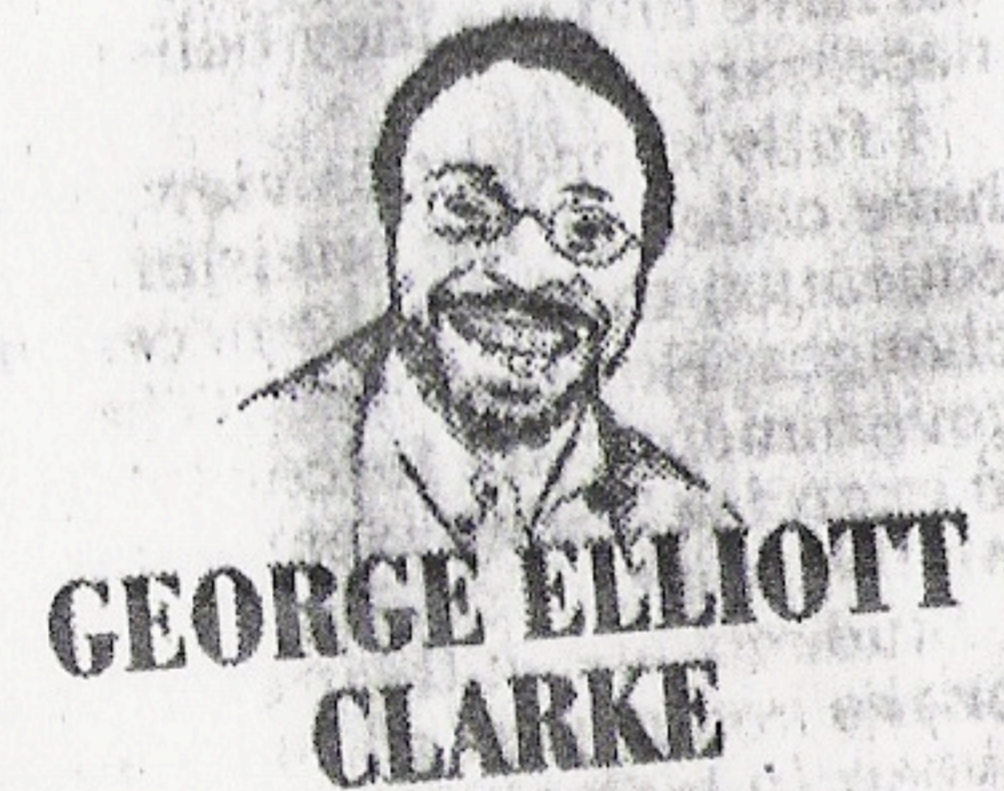
Ellis, who is
Scotia for the first time, says

Gaspereau Press gathering accolades

TODAY'S COLUMN must perform two duties: distribute laurels and recognize achievement. First come the plaudits.

Congratulations to Kathy Mac of Sambro Head and Roseway Publishing of Shelburne on the nomination of Nail Builders Plan for Strength and Growth for the 2002 Governor General's Award for Poetry. It is a startling work, simultaneously inventive and classical, and merits a wide audience.

Congratulations also to Gaspereau Press, Kentville, and Don McKay of Victoria on the nomination of *Vis a Vis*, a set of essays on poetry and nature, for the 2002 Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction. Garnering its second award nomination in two years, Gaspereau Press is likely the best small press in English Canada.



Gaspereau Press is not only an academy of good writing but also a powerhouse of design. The point is demonstrated again in its handling of a self-published work, *Drift: A Sea Drama* (\$5), by Haligonian poet Elizabeth Pierce. The work is a series of interlocking dramatic monologues by the likes of Ulysses, Henry Hudson, Joshua Slocum, and Brendan the Navigator: a mix of mariners, the fictional and the famous.

In her slim work of 32 pages, Pierce conjoins the past and the present, classical and post-modern discourse, to offer lively, cogent reworkings of the sagas of these legendary seamen. Her imagery is as powerfully indelible as the 17th-century illustrations recycled in this text from rare books from Frankfurt and Paris.

So, Pierce's Ulysses remembers: "My hair like lines of glowing toaster wire / was white when I left Ithaca for the last time / out of the steaming soup-pot Mediterranean," and he rejects "a bingoatthelegionhall old age." Slocum produces tart aphorisms: "After twenty, the tongue is indignant. / Thirty and words taste mildewed." Hudson recognizes that "a mackerel body crowned with woman's breasts / will make a sailor slaver."

Pierce's fine writing is beauti

fully accompanied by fine design. Seek out this booklet.

Another work deserving some close reading is *So Rarely in Our Skins* (\$14.95, The Muses' Company), a debut collection of poems by playwright and University of New Brunswick English professor Roger Moore. His lyrics supplement what has been an extraordinary year in East Coast poetry, with strong offerings from many quarters. Indeed, another author of a fine debut work, P.E.I. native Anne Compton, served as a critical but friendly reader of Moore's poems, thus aiding their passage into print.

Moore is a poet of vast reference, combining interests in Greek myth, popular culture, natural observation, autobiography and, of course, literature.

His lyrics try on exotic

See George / C7

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